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ABSTRACT

Dating violence can be described as a pattern of repeated threats or acts of physical, sexual, or emotional abuse by a member of an unmarried, noncohabitating couple. Dating violence is most often a pattern of behavior that begins with verbal and emotional abuse and eventually escalates into physical battering. Teens are particularly at risk because they often experiment and take risks in their efforts to demonstrate that they can handle problems on their own. Young people who have been victims of child abuse or who have witnessed abuse in their homes are more likely to engage in abuse or to see it as acceptable in a romantic or sexual relationship. A relationship is destructive if it hurts or frightens a partner, or does not make partners feel good about themselves. Signs that a relationship is not good are listed, and some suggestions are given to enable a young woman to determine if a male partner is likely to be violent. Suggestions are also offered about what to tell a young female victim, how parents can help a child, and how other adults can help young people confronted with dating violence. (SLD)

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